

Young goodman brown's character development essays example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Characters make up all stories; it is what makes them interesting. The character in the story is a figure around which action revolves. Be it humans, figures, animals, the author can make a character out of anything (Josephs, 1995). The aspects that make an individual identify a character as such, are the aspects to which the author reveals to them, either diegetically or mimetically (Josephs, 1995). In a diegetic characterization, the author reveals to the readers the character by explicitly telling them who he is. This achievement uses the third person where the author is in the observer's position and reveals his/ her opinion of the reader, such as the character is polite outgoing and so on. In mimetic characterization, however, the reader interprets the character by evaluating the actions they perform within the story. This goal involves the readers in the character's thoughts, speeches and other actions that reveal their character. This is a more realistic way to expose the character as the reader is allowed time to interact and judge their character on their own. However, these methods of characterization find use in many stories individually, either in one story or interchangeably within the same story (Josephs, 1995). This essay seeks to discuss the characterization of Young Goodman Brown's character in the story, 'Coming to Age'.

The story 'Coming to Age' by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a powerful presentation of character development through his character Young Goodman Brown. The story develops, seemingly plotless, but with great verve from the beginning to the end (Nathaniel, 2014). It is a mental and spiritual story as most of the events occur from Brown's mental perspective. The character of Brown develops from a young man, naïve, pure of heart and

with no conviction in his life. His disposition at the beginning of the story is one of faith in religion, people, and even to his wife to whom he is newlywed (Nathaniel, 2014). " Faith kept me back awhile" (Hawthorn, 141), Goodman reveals to the traveler in the woods. This symbolically shows Browns own faith held him back from sojourning with the devil. As the story progresses, however, Goodman assumes a round character with the narrator focusing on his actions as well as inner thoughts more than any other character.

In a twist of the story, Goodman embarks on a scantily explained journey, whose genesis the reader does not understand. This journey turns out as the one that changes his perceptions, from a naïve, incorruptible young man to the cynical, condescending man he becomes until his death (Connolly, 1968). The journey is symbolic of his character growth within the story.

Goodman brown's character is set in a puritan society, a highly religious people who have a blissful representation of life. He starts out on his journey as a blissful young man but comes back from the forest as a man full of doubt and mistrust with his previously pure society.

Hawthorne, through the old man, achieves the feat of corrupting Goodman by taking him through motions that systematically discredit the faith that Goodman once had in people. For instance, the old man who happens to be the devil reveals to Goodman of his acquaintance with both Goodman's father and grandfather. Further, the catechist teacher who also doubles up as Goodman's moral advisor, happens to be a witch and corrupted. The town governor too, as is revealed to him, has communion with the devil (Connolly, 1968). In this way, Hawthorne systematically corrupts the character of Goodman from a young blissful man to the corruptible cynic himself. He

never loses his spite of people " for his dying hour was gloom" (148).

It is not apparent, however, if the actions happened, or are the result of Goodman's imagination. The events having happened in the same forest and during a night reveals a symbolism on the journey everyman takes, from blissful innocence as a child to a corrupted man at the end of their journeys, at death (Eluprogram, 2014). The character of Goodman brown exposes the hypocrisy exhibited by the town people, in the pretext of being a puritan community. Goodman brown himself, the protagonist for goodness, is rooted in evil and his history does not do well to serve his faith. The devil reveals to him that his grandfather whipped a Quaker woman, while his father set an Indian village on fire, which indicates that Goodman is a seed of evil himself. His wife, faith, whose name is a representation of belief in good, and whom Goodman sets his last hope on by indicating that he'd hang on her skirt and fly with her to heaven. The action of hanging on the skirt of faith to heaven reveals that Goodman is no longer trustful of his ability to reach heaven on his own. The journey with the devil has corrupted him too, or made conscious to him aspects of evil in him, which he had previously been oblivious. He asks himself, "'But where is Faith'" (Hawthorn, 146). The revelation of faith's presence in the devil meeting back at the forest, therefore, is the logical end to hope in Goodman of any good, in the world. Her faith, which he trusted more than his own is as tainted as the rest of the town's people (Eluprogram, 2014).

Works Cited:

" Character Development in " Young Goodman Brown" - Yahoo Voices - voices. yahoo. com." Yahoo Contributor Network. N. p., n. d. Web.

<https://assignbuster.com/young-goodman-browns-character-development-essays-example/>

11 Feb. 2014.

Connolly, Thomas E. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Young Goodman Brown.

Columbus, Ohio: C. E. Merrill, 1968. Print.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Young Goodman Brown.

Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Library, 1996. Print.

Josephs, Lawrence. Balancing Empathy and Interpretation: Relational Character Analysis. Northvale, N. J: J. Aronson, 1995. Print.

" Nathaniel Hawthorne, Young Goodman Brown." Eluprogram. Eluprogram, n. d. Web. 11 Feb. 2014. .

" UNIT THREE, Character development." Home Page. N. p., n. d. Web. 11 Feb. 2014. .